

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 117392

NODIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT HELSINKI 1399 SENT ACTION SECSTATE MAY 8

QUOTE: S E C R E T HELSINKI 1399

NODIS

DEPARTMENT PASS:

AMEMBASSY - MOSCOW - IMMEDIATE

NSC - DR. BRZEZINSKI - IMMEDIATE

DOD/SECRETARY OF DEFENSE - IMMEDIATE

DOD/JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF - IMMEDIATE

ACDA - AMBASSADOR PAUL C. WARNKE - IMMEDIATE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM PCAT US UR

SUBJECT: US/SOVIET CAT: REPORTING CABLE MAY 8 PLENARY SESSION

SUMMARY: TALKS ON CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFER RESTRAINT
CONCLUDED IN A POSITIVE TONE. TWO SESSIONS WERE HELD TODAY.
THE FIRST, STATED TO BE A HEAD OF DELEGATION MEETING

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TO DISCUSS TREATMENT OF ARMS TRANSFER ISSUES AT THE
SSOD, ACTUALLY EVOLVED INTO SOLID DISCUSSION OF THE
SPECIFICS OF THE US-SUGGESTED REGIONAL APPROACH. DURING
THIS SESSION, THE SOVIETS RAISED SERIOUS QUESTIONS IN-
DICATING SUBSTANTIAL INTEREST. THE PLENARY SESSION WAS
RELATIVELY SHORT, WITH EACH SIDE HIGHLIGHTING POSITIONS
IT HAD TAKEN PREVIOUSLY. A JOINT COMMUNIQUE WAS ACCPETED

AD REFERENDUM, PENDING FINAL EVALUATION IN MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON UP TO RELEASE TIME (THURSDAY NOON). FULL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE PREPARED UPON DELEGATION'S RETURN TO WASHINGTON.

THE HEADS AND SELECTED MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATIONS MET ON THE MORNING OF MAY 8 IN A SPECIAL SESSION TO DISCUSS SSOD MATTERS. MENDELEVICH ALSO TOOK THIS OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW SEVERAL ASPECTS OF THE US REGIONAL APPROACH.

MENDELEVICH INDICATED THAT THE SOVIET APPROACH IN THE SSOD WOULD STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF ARMS RESTRAINT, THE URGENCY OF THE PROBLEM, AND THE NEED FOR PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS AND THE FULL COOPERATION OF ALL MAJOR SUPPLIERS. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE SOVIET APPROACH WOULD CONTAIN NO "SPIRIT OF CONFRONTATION" BUT MAY HIGHLIGHT THE CONTINUING GROWTH OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS. US/SOVIET CAT TALKS MAY RECEIVE MENTION, BUT ONLY IN A GENERAL WAY AND WITHOUT NOTING ANY SPECIFIC PROBLEMS OR ISSUES. MENDELEVICH HIGHLIGHTED THE NEED FOR THE US AND SOVIET DELEGATIONS AT THE SSOD TO MAINTAIN CLOSE CONTACT AND SUGGESTED THAT EACH SIDE PROVIDE A MEMBER TO THEIR RESPECTIVE SSOD DELEGATIONS WHO HAD PARTICIPATED IN THE CAT TALKS.

GELB FOLLOWED BY PRESENTING THE CURRENT US POSITION, STATING IN PART THAT THE US WOULD NOT TAKE A LEADING ROLE NOR PROPOSE ANY NEW INITIATIVES SINCE THE MAJOR
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POWERS SHOULD NOT BE OUT IN FRONT; FURTHER, THAT OUR EFFORTS WOULD BE DIRECTED TOWARDS GAINING THE BASIC ENDORSEMENT OF OTHER STATES FOR RESTRAINT--PARTICULARLY IN THE PROGRAM OF ACTION. IN SUM, NOTHING THE US WILL PRESENT AT THE SSOD WILL BE INCONSISTENT WITH THE US/SOVIET CAT TALKS AND WOULD CONTAIN NO SURPRISES FOR THE SOVIETS. GELB AGREED THAT IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA THAT EACH SIDE PROVIDE A DELEGATE TO THE SSOD WHO HAD PARTICIPATED IN THE CAT TALKS.

TURNING FROM THE SSOD, MENDELEVICH AND GELB AGAIN EXCHANGED THOUGHTS ON THE REGIONAL APPROACH, HIGHLIGHTED BY A SERIES OF QUESTIONS PROPOSED BY MENDELEVICH. ALTHOUGH NO NEW SUBSTANTIVE IDEAS FURFACED, IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT THE SOVIETS HAD GIVEN EXTENSIVE THOUGHT TO THIS SUBJECT.

THE FOURTH PLENARY SESSION WAS RELATIVELY SHORT, WITH BOTH SIDES SUMMARIZING THEIR POSITION. THE SOVIETS AGAIN DESCRIBED THE UNIVERSAL NATURE OF THEIR PRINCIPLES, BUT INDICATED READINESS TO CONSIDER THE US REGIONAL APPROACH. GELB STRESSED THE NEED TO APPLY PRINCIPLES TO THE REAL WORLD.

FOR THE NEXT ROUND, GELB SUGGESTED AN EXTENSIVE

AGENDA, INCLUDING PLENARY SESSIONS AND THREE TYPES OF WORKING GROUPS: POLITICAL/LEGAL, MILITARY/TECHNICAL, AND REGIONAL. HE NOTED THAT THE US WOULD BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS SUBSTANTIVELY, AND MAKE CONCRETE PROPOSALS ON TWO REGIONS: LATING AMERICA AND AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA. WHILE AGREEING WITH THE GENERAL DIRECTION OF THE NEXT ROUND SUGGESTED BY THE UNITED STATES, MENDELEVICH WARNED AGAINST EXPECTATION OF EARLY AGREEMENT BY MOSCOW TO SPECIFIC REGIONAL WORKING GROUPS. THERE WAS SOME DISCUSSION OF MODALITIES FOR THE NEXT ROUND, BUT NO AGREEMENTS WERE STATED.

COMMENT: OVERALL, THE US SIDE MADE A STRONG AND PERSISTENT PRESENTATION OF THE NEED, IN THE NEXT ROUND, SECRET

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FOR THESE MEETINGS TO CONSIDER SPECIFIC AND CONCRETE MEASURES TO RESTRAIN ARMS TRANSFERS. AT LEAST PARTIAL SOVIET ACCEPTANCE OF SUCH AN APPROACH IS INDICATED BY THEIR PRESENTATIONS DURING THE ROUND, AND BY SEVERAL POINTS INCORPORATED IN THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE. ALTHOUGH PROSPECTS SEEM MUCH BRIGHTER THAN BEFORE THE HELSINKI ROUND GEGAN, MENDELEVICH CLEARLY WAS NOT AUTHORIZED TO ACCEPT COMPLETE U.S. FRAMEWORK AND AGENDA FOR THE NEXT ROUND. ACCEPTANCE OF GENERAL DIRECTION WAS ENCOURAGING, BUT FINAL EVALUATION OF SOVIET SERIOUSNESS MUST AWAIT RESPONSE TO US PROPOSAL FOR THE NEXT ROUND'S AGENDA.

GELB PLANS TO INDICATE TO MENDELEVICH AT DINNER THIS EVENING, THAT US WILL FORMALLY REJECT SOVIET "NEIGHBORS" PROPOSAL SHORTLY; TOPIC WAS NOT RAISED AT PLENARY SO AS NOT TO EMBARRASS MENDELEVICH PERSONALLY.

BEGIN TEXT:

JOINT COMMUNICATION

FOR RELEASE NOON (EST), THURSDAY, MAY 11, 1978

THE DELEGATION OF THE SOVIET UNION AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA HELD CONSULTATIONS IN HELSINKI, FINLAND, MAY 4 TO MAY 8, 1978, ON THE PROBLEM OF LIMITING INTERNATIONAL TRANSFERS OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS. THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION WAS LED BY MR. LESLIE H. GELB, DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF POLITICO-MILITARY AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE. THE SOVIET DELEGATION WAS LED BY AMBASSADOR L. I. MENDELEVICH. THE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS TOOK PLACE IN A BUSINESSLIKE ATMOSPHERE.

IT WAS AGREED THAT THE PROBLEM OF LIMITING INTERNATIONAL SECRET

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TRANSFERS OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS IS URGENT, AND CALLS FOR SOLUTION ON A CONSTRUCTIVE BASIS SO AS TO PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY AND STRENGTHEN DETENTE. EACH SIDE PRESENTED ITS VIEWS ON POSSIBLE WAYS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM. THEY POINTED OUT THAT THESE MEETINGS, BEING A COMPONENT OF THE SOVIET-AMERICAN NEGOTIATIONS ON CESSATION OF THE ARMS RACE, ARE HELD IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE SOVIET UNION, SIGNED MAY 29, 1972.

BOTH DELEGATIONS STATED THEIR BELIEF THAT EFFECTIVE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM REQUIRES FULL CONSIDERATION OF THE LEGITIMATE DEFENSE NEEDS OF RECIPIENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PURPOSES AND PRINCIPLES OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS. THEY EXPRESSED THEIR MUTUAL DESIRE THAT THE EFFORTS OF THE TWO SIDES SHOULD ASSIST OTHER INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO RESTRAIN THE TRANSFER OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS, SUCH AS THE OPPORTUNITY OFFERED BY THE FORTHCOMING SPECIAL SESSION OF THE U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT, AS WELL AS POSSIBLE REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS.

AFTER TWO ROUNDS OF CONSULTATIONS, IT WAS AGREED THAT A BASIS EXISTS TO HOLD REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETINGS IN ORDER TO EXPLORE CONCRETE MEASURES THAT COULD BE TAKEN, INCLUDING MEASURES TO ENGAGE OTHER SUPPLIER COUNTRIES, TO LIMIT INTERNATIONAL TRANSFERS OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS. THE EXACT DATE OF THE NEXT ROUND OF THE MEETINGS, EARLY THIS SUMMER, WILL BE DETERMINED THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS.

END TEXT

RIDGWAY
UNQUOTE VANCE

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